

Tape 3

Side A, 1/8 - 3/16

9 APR 1979

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MEMO FOR:

FROM:

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I think we better hurry up and decline that honorary degree
from National University in San Diego.

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±(EXCLUSIVE: 10 P.M. EST EMBARGO)±

±BY JOHN KIFNER±

±C. 1979 N.Y. TIMES NEWS SERVICE±

TEHRAN - THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC BEING SECRETLY DRAFTED HERE CALLS FOR A POWERFUL, SEPARATE RELIGIOUS BODY WHICH CAN REVIEW, RATIFY OR REJECT THE ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, ACCORDING TO SOURCES CLOSE TO THE PROCESS.

THE OFFICE, A KIND OF MORAL MINISTRY OR DIRECTORATE, IS TO ENSURE THE THE GOVERNMENT'S LAWS AND POLICIES FOLLOW ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES. THE UNIQUE INSTITUTION REFLECTS THE SINGULAR NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION HERE.

THE RELIGIOUS QUALITY IS AT ONCE DEEPLY ROOTED IN IRANIAN HISTORY, PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE LAST CENTURY, AND, AT THE SAME TIME, THE FOCAL POINT OF POTENTIAL FUTURE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE NEW REGIME.

ITS ROOTS LIE IN THE HIGHLY POLITICAL TRADITION OF THE SHIITE SECT OF ISLAM DOMINANT HERE WHICH HAS REPEATEDLY BATTLED THE LINKED ENEMIES OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND FOREIGN INFLUENCE. ITS POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES LIE IN THE SPREAD OF WESTERN, LIBERAL AND MODERNIST THOUGHT AND PRACTICE WHICH - ALONG WITH TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS FEELING - HELPED TO OVERTHROW THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY OF SHAH MOHAMMAD REZA PAHLAVI.

THE TWO FACTORS FORM A COMPLEX PATTERN OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS AND THE SECULAR, THE TRADITIONAL AND THE MODERN, THAT UNDERLIES DEVELOPMENTS HERE.

THE CONSTITUTION IS BEING DRAFTED BY THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, APPOINTED BY AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL WHICH, NEXT TO THE AYATOLLAH HIMSELF, IS THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY HERE, IS SECRET.

A REFERENDUM IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS FRIDAY ON WHICH THE BALLOT WILL CARRY THE SINGLE QUESTION: "DO YOU WANT AN ISLAMIC REPUBLIC, YES OR NO."

IT IS GENERALLY PRESUMED THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC WILL CARRY THE DAY.

THERE HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN OBJECTIONS TO THE FORM OF THE BALLOT. CIVIL RIGHTS LIBERALS AND THE TWO PRINCIPAL ARMED GUERRILLA GROUPS, THE LEFTIST FEDAYEEN AND THE ISLAMIC MUJAHADEN HAVE CONTENDED IT OFFERS A SOMEWHAT LIMITED CHOICE.